**France**

**4a.** Name two details that depict the Second Estate in this representation.

**High-level response**

i. The Second Estate is depicted through the clothing of the gentleman, namely the plumed hat, collar and sash.

I The Second Estate is depicted through the sword the gentleman carries.

2 marks

4b. Name two details that depict the Third Estate in this representation.

**High-level response**

L The Third Estate is depicted by the simple, practical garb of the worker, notably his hat.

ii. The Third Estate is depicted by the spade the worker carries.

2 marks

**High-level response**

1. The First and Second Estates, by being seated at the helm of the cart, are seen to hold the privileged positions.
2. The Third Estate, which supports the kingdom through its labour, has no control over matters and enjoys no privilege, and thus is standing at the rear of the cart.

2 marks

21

**High-level response**

A series of expensive foreign wars in the eighteenth century, including the Austrian War of Succession and the American War of Independence, had left the French crown in huge debt to foreign lenders. This dire economic situation was compounded by the lack of a central treasury and an unreliable method of tax collection. Furthermore, huge exemptions granted to the clergy and nobility due to feudal privileges meant that the fiscal system was unjust and inefficient, as the brunt of the burden was borne solely by the Third Estate.

Finding his kingdom on the verge of bankruptcy, Louis XVI employed a series of financial Controllers-General to address the problem and institute reform, including Necker, Calonne and de Brienne. However, all of these ministers faced the opposition of the clergy, nobility and *Parlements,* who stood to lose from potential reforms, and Louis was obliged to dismiss them and call an Assembly of Notables to debate tax reforms. This Assembly, composed of the very same individuals who had opposed the King's ministers' reforms, predictably blocked all possibility of reform. The King's reaction was to expel the rebellious Paris *Parlement* and issue decrees severely limiting their power in favour of specially appointed judges loyal to him. Yet this act of royal despotism concerned foreign investors who refused to loan France the money it desperately relied upon. As a result, the King was forced to recall both the *Parlement* and his dismissed minister Necker, who raised only enough loans to tide the kingdom over until the meeting of the Estates-General, which the *Parlements* had declared the only body capable of deciding the issue of taxes in France.

6 marks

1. To what extent is this representation useful in understanding the social problems that existed in the *ancien regime?*

**High-level response**

This representation faithfully represents the fact that it was the Third Estate that was overwhelmingly responsible for the financial upkeep of the kingdom, as it paid many taxes from which the privileged orders enjoyed exemptions, notably the *gabelle.* Furthermore, the way in which the Third Estate is relegated to the back of the carriage suggesting that it has no input into political and governmental processes, adequately depicts the way in which feudal courts and aristocratic government denied those of the Third Estate participation in civic life.

However, the representation does not acknowledge the eighteenth-century French phenomenon of venal offices, a method by which the richest and most intelligent of the bourgeoisie could purchase a title and thus advance their fortunes, a process so popular that it is estimated that in the 1780s as much as 35 per cent of the nobility had been recently ennobled in this way. The representation also hints at a considerable degree of hostility between the orders; yet revisionists such as Furet have argued that it was not hostility and a denial of privilege to the Third Estate by the Second Estate that caused social tension, but quite the opposite: the huge influx of enlightened bourgeois into the ranks of the nobility caused an unprecedented disunity of ideals within the order. Indeed, it wasn't until the latter stages of the Estates-General that the Third Estate, driven by Abbe Sieyes's pamphlet *What is the Third Estate?,* began to question not royal despotism, but the motives of the First and 'Second Estates.

8 marks

**SECTION B – PART 1–** continued